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Graffiti: Public art movement

Abstract:

Art has its own distinct way of being and should not be confused with manifestations of imagination, such as propaganda or controversy. Graffiti is generally considered to be a social, cultural, political as well as a textual practice. It is a unique platform, where the speakers are unconstrained to express their ideologies, personal or social problems. Also, graffiti has been and will always be a form of political protest, of propaganda, because it is about claiming the street, doing what you want, not obeying the social rules and not following the directions issued by the art market. Freedom of expression in art means the absence of any additional rules. To aim the study purpose, the author used theoretical and empirical methods such as comparative, descriptive, content analysis and inductive. In the study course, the author used the materials of the works of modern experts in the field of art and graffiti such as J. Anthony, Julius, U. Eco, N. Ganz, E.H. Gombrich, E. Levinas, R. Palmer, A. Rorimer, Y. Yerznkian, G. Gasparyan, and G.C. Stovers.

Keywords: graffiti, mural, painting, artist, colours.

Introduction

Graffiti is generally considered to be a social, cultural, political as well as a textual practice. It is a unique platform, where the speakers are unconstrained to express their ideologies, personal or social problems. Unlike other platforms, graffiti provides space practically for each member of the society and as a form of communication is being

processed by a great number of people. It stands to reason that viewing graffiti as a piece of text on a public surface can be considered as a specific type of rhetorical speech. One can never be fully aware of the reasons behind the creation of a piece of graffiti unless she/he is its creator, but one thing that can logically be concluded is that graffiti texts have a well-defined purpose of persuading the reader to reconsider his opinion or the owned information concerning different issues. That is why in order to fulfill the task of a comprehensive study of discourse we are analyzing it as a form of rhetorical speech based on the three components suggested by Aristotle (also known as the persuasion triad). By taking this angle for the analysis we can reveal many persuasive and communicative functions performed by different figures of speech, most importantly the metaphor, which finds its expression in the visual and textual forms in graffiti discourse.

Graffiti as a popular form of street art, giving the individual self-realization, translates their national and cultural vision of the depicted. There arises a need to study the nature of the scope and influence of this element in the structure of language and culture, to identify the main features of graffiti culture. Graffiti is quite actively included in the semiotic life of the city, so there emerged a need for a fullfledged scientific explanation of this phenomenon due to the lack of unified theoretical concepts that would ensure their objective interpretation and viability

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The materials of the study

The works of art exist to give us a shock, because shocking the viewer is essential for art (art historian E. H. Gombrich). Art can crash illusions, denounce prejudices and can also drop out conventional attitudes. Lucian Freud: "What do you expect from a painting? I want it to amaze, to bother, to go convince everybody." Nowadays, the young greffers reply to Freud's desire. Guillame Apollinaire: "The surprise is the richest source for what is considered to be new". The best inside the contemporary art is provoking, difficult, annoying (Anthony, 2009:32). Inside its world coexists a

pluralism of aesthetics and a vast number of artistic practices. Although some are more fertile than others in producing new works, neither has a recognized superiority over the others.

There are no accepted principles for acting on the creation and judgment of a work of art. Leon Golub explained, “the new communicative empires do not follow the national or conceptual boundaries.” (Anthony, 2009:32)

Thousands of years ago, primitive man blows colored powder through hollow bones in order to obtain the shapes of things and beings. Nowadays, the modern man uses the stencil and the spray. In ancient Greece were found pieces of clay on which were engraved notes and the diggings in Pompeii brought to light a wealth of graffiti, including election slogans, drawings and obscenities. Graffiti came into being with the inscriptions found on the walls of ancient tombs, in the catacombs of Rome or Pompeii. We could say that first example known as graffiti can be found in the ancient Greek town Ephesus (today Turkey) consisting of a palm, a vague shape of a heart, a trace of a leg and a number. These subtly indicate how many steps must be taken for someone to find a courtesan.

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius has helped graffiti to maintain itself on the walls of Pompeii buildings and gives us a direct perspective on street life: vulgar Latin, insults, magic, declarations of love, political messages. In contrast to the typical modern graffiti, alphabets and quotations from literature – especially, the first verse of Aeneid by Vergilius – were found on the walls of Pompeii either for the pleasure of the writer or the desire to impress, although anonymously, the passer – by with familiarity, with the letters and literature. However, not only the Greeks and Romans painted graffiti: the Maian site in Tikal, Guatemala, also contains ancient examples. There is even graffiti realized by Vikings in Newgrange, Ireland.

In the modern world, Latin-American Street art is recognized as a world leader in the category to which it belongs, a title gained over time, due to the fact that around 1930, Laureano Guevara set up a department of mural painting at the University of Art in Chile (*Escuela de Bellas Artes*). Guevara’s social project seemed to be more successful than expected. Chilean artists Camilo Mori and Gregorio de la Fuente will teach mural painting at this Art University, taking care to maintain educational art at a basic elementary level. South America conquered the world with its naïve and figuratively well-executed drawings. Economic and social problems, drug abuse and conflicts among gangs in this part of the world, have had a profound impact on the

South American graffiti scene; just as graffiti in New York reflects the opposition between the wealthy upper classes and those living in the ghetto. Sprays could be very difficult to be found, often artists having to diversify through mixed techniques. The history of underground art, known under various titles, the most common being graffiti, begins in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and has its roots in bombing. The first to use such expressions in art were Cornbread, Cool Earl and Taki-183, a Greek teenager from Manhattan. Violeta Para became known in Paris for her paintings and in Chile for the beginning of the protest and the “new song” movement that continued thanks to her protégé, Victor Jara, directly connected to folk art.

Street art knows different directions one of them being the propaganda painting. The collaboration with artists, in itself, was a demonstration of popular action from both parts- Salvador Allende and Eduardo Frei (Popular Action Front = Frente de Accion Popular). The Christian Democrats began their campaign in May 1963 with Frei’s nationalist star painted on the city walls as long as Chile was. The first pro-Allende mural was painted during the night on Avenida Espana by a team led by painter Jorge Osorio in July 1963. The second pro-Allende one, an allegory of Chilean hopes and efforts, was also painted on Avenida Espana, this time near the Baron underground station by Osorio’s team. So became the street an artistic area. While in 1963 the murals were done clandestinely, painted during the night, in 1964, with the socialist Mayor of Vina permission, Allende’s fans painted the Capuchins Bridge unhindered. The team covered 750 square meters of the bridge walls helped by the locals in the area, excited about what was happening there. The propaganda murals are made in water colors or based on latex.

The artist Alessandro Gonzales that what the spectators of this type of art especially want to see is spontaneity and speed, concluding that what matters is not the perishable mural (latex) but the message. It has to keep up with the events, even practicing a return on the same surface with another mural. Roberto Malta explains that the text induces a new perspective on the vision of a work: “to see is not just what the camera can do, to see something grow, to see the space in which it exists.” (Palmer, 2008:10) This specific idea does not really belong to him, because the Cubists and then the Post-War French “Lettristes” experienced the potential of the plastic word. These ideas have been well understood in South America.

Since 2000s politically engaged street propaganda has merged with young art to create a fast and multifunctional panorama of street art, ironic and didactic. Outdoor

painting is more than ever encouraged in the early 21st century South America. Collaboration is an important part in street activity. Real-time, 'live' pictorial events, performed by groups of artists with complementary styles, remix elements and introduce each other to striking characters. This will never happen among the exhibiting artists of contemporary art galleries. The latter are far too conservative and individualistic. Secrets cannot be revealed. The gallery artist can participate if only the other artists are already trained as strong personalities who do not allow external interventions in their art. For street artists the act of painting is a challenge, because they have to think more and more about what they will do. It's a completely different approach. The process works only if the artist as an individual takes into account the other artists' methods, the colors they use and what is most important to combine their styles so as to harmonize the entire ensemble, each of them improving the other ones' work.

Art critics refer to graffiti as ghetto's Pop Art, which is just a strategy to incorporate a manifestation of aesthetic and social rebellion into official culture. In fact, Keith Haring, one of the most popular graffiti creators, is largely rejected by the community of graffiti 'writers', due to him being primarily a museum and exhibition artist, one of those who has never painted within a "painting gang" and has never defined the authorities. A graffiti artist career usually begins, or used to begin with the inscription of his name (tag) in a more or less elaborate manner and transgressing the rigors of standardized writing through a technique to obstruct public space. By aggressing the eye through distorting the alphabet (in a meaningful way already transformed by the art of advertising, one of the graffiti artists' sources of inspiration), graffiti serves mainly as a mean of performing a reconstructed identity and one which opposes itself to decoding (some critics compare tagging with the African technique of multiple names).

North American and European street art runs along subway stations. In South America Street, art has gained its honor place, respectively in the heart of the city. Although graffiti was a main art ingredient in New York and Barcelona, it failed to gain a stable place on the main arteries-Broadway and Las Ramblas. Indeed, graffiti and street art are nowadays discouraged en masse in the center of Barcelona. In other big cities like New York, e.g., authorities allow no form of graffiti or stencil to be used, especially in the central areas. In Santiago, unlike Barcelona or New York, the propagandistic art of more than a quarter of a century, has made its place on the

Alameda, especially on the opposite side of St. Lucia Hill and miles away along the Alameda storefront show a colorful chaos. Painted with a spray along the river that runs through the city of Santiago was a space dedicated to Protestant art and today it has become a mixture of pictorials in constant motion. The image of high-life storefronts full of colors and that created through advertising do not follow the same line with the one created through graffiti. However, graffiti aims to be independent of advertising and architecture, its goal being the one to create its own environment. Graffiti claims the streets. That is why the authorities will always push this form of artistic expression towards the area of crime, suburbs and vandalism. This is the reason; the art market has developed the term ‘Street art’ in order to this form to be accepted to some extent.

In 1973, sociologist Hugo Martinez, a professor at City College in New York, felt these street artists’ potential and he founded The Graffiti Artists Union in order to promote talented graffers being helped by the exhibitions organized by this Union. The 1973 New York’s magazine “Graffiti Parade” article, published by Richard Goldstein, was a public acknowledgement of the potential of the aforementioned artists. In the 80s the phenomenon of graffiti experienced a decline being absorbed by the commercial and art market of New York. In conclusion, the 1980s represented a setback for the graffiti movement. Big major changes were taking place inside the American society: the law forbade traders from selling paints to minors and the formers were forced to store their paints in special places, making shoplifting more difficult. At the same time, New York City budget for stopping graffiti has grown and parks and depots, possible to be considered mural artistic scenes, have been much better protected. Electric fences were built and any damage was promptly repaired. Graffers’ favourite areas have become almost inaccessible. The process of removing and cleaning graffiti works in New York has taken a whole new dimension, frustrating many fans of mural expression. On May 12, 1984 New York City’s Administration issued a decision to remove all public transportations that had been ‘victims’ of the graffiti movement. This was the beginning of the so-called “clean wagons” current, which was intended to slow down “graffiti gangs” and clean up the city. Despite these measures, graffiti will always find its means “to get out” on the streets.

In Europe, in Paris, stencil artists had been active a lot more before the first tags appeared. Paris and Madrid came with their own stencil styles and other European artists used their techniques. European graffers introduced a lot of concepts and new

levels of thinking, among those being logo and iconic graffiti, innovations and improvements in the art of characters, sculptural graffiti and new approaches in urban art. Many of these artists are French, such as Akroe, KRSN, Monsieur Andre, HNT, Staki Alexone, Blek le Rat. They are artists whose works have an immediate visual impact, an impact that European art tends to assume itself. "I wanted to provoke the public to react, to cause a sensation, to create a subversive breaking of mass media because the latter saturates everything around us", wrote D'face in his work *Street Art*.

Canada has also managed to make its own mark worldwide with the traditional "monikers" (figures, frames or images made on freight trains, painted in waxed chalk). They have a long history dating back to the Great Depression of the 1930s, when people got on trains without a specific plan and travelled from city to city looking for work. Over the years, they created their own form to communicate using the chalk, just to express themselves to exchange ideas. Today, freight trains are favourite surfaces to be covered in drawings. They are considered to be interactive because the trains present them to those whose countries they pass. It happens a lot that the artist to see his work only after some months or even not to see it any more. The Canadian artist Bezerker, an abstract participant at monikers' culture, distinguished himself by his surreal spray-painted drawings, made on trains or walls. He is well known for his exhibitions where he presents common usual rusted objects, which he decorates with pictures taken from magazines.

In 2007 the government of the South American continent came to the conclusion that graffiti is a cultural attractive and vivid scenario. Fisek and other artists belonging to Vieja School faced the connotations of the new figuration, taking them into account, welcoming on the other hand, the "cartoon" style associated with the new figuration. "As a child, I always believed in art," says Blek le Rat in "Street Art", "and I am sure this urban movement is the most important since Pop Art, even though it has not been recognized by the art establishment. However, many artists and groups of artists combine styles and influences, for example the Peka group. Members of this group are of pre-Columbian, Polynesian, modernist, propagandist, post-modernist (Basquiat) and contemporary latin american influence. DFM's group extends to the realm of criticism and design, and "this is reflected on the painted walls, but in addition to us being innovative, we want not only to add new styles continuously but to remain flexible, which unfortunately does not happen often enough." (Palmer, 2008:180)

Among the European artists of the past, Picasso, Dali are echoes on the Chilean walls. Vazko, the graffiti artist, considered Picasso to be the one who changed the rules for those who followed him on the line. A primitive but clever Picasso-influenced design, combined with textual highlights, a nice indigenous graffiti covers a few square meters in a country where modern European art is known almost exclusively from reproductions. "There has been an endless discussion on 'tolerated' and 'non-tolerated' graffiti", says Nicholas Ganz. The art market is very different from the original graffiti movement, so an artist may well exhibit in galleries, but the latter will never be able to capture the sensation of illegally painted graffiti on the street and therefore, will never be able to expose its true essence.

Art has its own distinct way of being and should not be confused with manifestations of imagination, such as propaganda or controversy. Yes, but graffiti has been and will always be a form of political protest, of propaganda, because it is about claiming the street, doing what you want, not obeying the social rules and not following the directions issued by the art market. Freedom of expression in art means the absence of any additional rules. "When you make street art", says Buff Monster, "there is no negotiation or financial problem". It all starts with fun and the pleasure of playing, then comes the desire to share with others what you do and then the issue of public attention. The latter, therefore, cannot claim "demands on mass culture, but must bear its proposals." (Eco, 2008:49) In order to reach a wider audience, KRSN combined his interest in illustration, painting and graphics to create comic book characters and personal drawings on stickers and later, on walls.

When street artists evolved on a large scale having the consent of contemporary art galleries, they tended to break the rules and create a strong impact on the street moving public (art going public) that considered this type of art as being approachable and inspiring. Spank the Monkey, Invader, Swoon, Fairey, Banksy, Shepard used to exhibit at the Baltic Center, a public art museum in Gateshead, UK. Their work proved to be a real show. Banksy becomes a phenomenon, a trend. Journalist Max Foster called it the "Banksy Effect" to illustrate how the interest in other street artists has grown due to Banksy's success. For the young artists it is a good time to make money through galleries and corporations. Galleries are willing to provide opportunities. Both the English original Banksy, with his mixture of ironic images or political message, and the German "Bananensprayer", Thomas Baumgartel, who exhibited his stencils on bananas in countless of galleries and museums.

Chronopolis, an event organized in the summer of 2002 by Carpe Diem magazine having the help of the Greek Ministry of Culture, brought 16 international graffiti artists together in this country. This project was initiated to promote graffiti as an art form and was part of a governmental initiative called *The 2000-2004 Cultural Olympics* to mark The Olympics in Athens. Working in two teams, the artists traveled to ten cities and created large-scale compositions on the walls. Participants included Besok, Codeak, Bizzare, Mak1, Os Gemeos and Loomit (Ganz, 2004:162). Graffiti art shocks, provokes, is a vivid phenomenon. Bold, sometimes offensive, sometimes profound, graffiti is an artistic current that is not afraid to blow up all prejudices. Banksy, Dalek, Os Gameos, Corail, Daim, Above are names that have literally changed the face of street through art. Their works and that belonging to many such artists around the world have been put together by Nicholas Ganz in a vast album, the best-selling book of contemporary art: *Graffiti. Street Art on Five Continents*.

The advent of the internet has played an interesting role in the evolution of graffiti. Although some artists avoided this new environment, claiming that direct experience of art form is crucial, many other artists and their disciples welcomed it with open arms, as an extra field of action. Enthusiasts have laid the groundwork for massive archives. One example is “Art Crimes”, which has undoubtedly become the world’s most important site for spreading many artists’ talent to a wider and larger audience. In many countries, these archives of photographs and information are an important means of accessing what other artists’ work may offer differently. Before the internet revolution, continents, cities, even neighborhoods had their own distinctive graffiti cultures. Nowadays, these differences continue to exist. To some extent, but have also received style influences from around the world. For countries such as South Africa or Russia, which artists tend to neglect in their travels and where it is almost impossible to find a graffiti magazine or to find any information about graffiti movements, quality sprays the internet can be an opened door to invaluable possibilities. It remains to be seen whether digital graffiti could be a solution for the graffiti art to gain its legality or it is just a sterile experiment having no connection to the morals of street art. Nicholas Ganz is of the opinion that: “There is no digital graffiti. It is an art that belongs to the streets, which means that graffiti is a street art and street art is graffiti. When graffiti is exhibited in galleries it loses its authenticity by becoming graffiti on canvas. Digital graffiti is just a nice game but it cannot be an

alternative. However, e.g., if you make a stencil on the computer, print it and take it to the street, it would render graffiti.”

We will discuss the status of graffiti and whether this type of event is an artistic one or just a gesture of revolt. Many artists tend to stay at a distance from the term graffiti because they no longer consider it contemporary, invoking images related to vandalism and damage; or it is treated as a generic term for street art. Therefore, some artists, in order to be different and original, prefer to label their works as “aerosol art” or “urban art”. Many artists used sprays at the beginning of their artistic career; now they work as visual artists or designers. They naively believed that art is a powerful means by which many problems can be brought to the public’s attention and through which society can be changed for the better. That is why the huge, spray-painted images abound in messages, most of them social. These artists have shown that graffiti is a form of narrative because it tells “a story”. However, art is not literature, it is an extension of an expressive silence. Who chose our cultural icons and role models, values and aesthetics? We live in a time when manipulation is a scam. Does the trend inspire the street or vice versa? English designer John Richmond gives in to the urban spirit and creates a summer collection with strong underground accents. Well known for his original collections of printed materials, natural leather jackets with tattooed sleeves or prints, he focuses his attention, this time, on graffiti print motifs. Visual art attached to fashion has already been seen before. Graffiti is a social expression like “hot rods” in the 1950s, or long hair in the 1960s, it is a short-lived advertisement for rebellious teenagers. “Putting my creation on my T-shirts was a very natural step”, says Sheone (Palmer, 2008:124). People need to be included in the work of art. “I adapt myself to any surface to work on, getting interesting results in the street or in galleries”, said Aiko. “I work on any different surface, I like to put texture on it; I use all kinds of tools: the pencil, the oil, the clay, pieces of wood, canvas, paper; everything around me”, said the same Aiko.

Haring became interested in the thick outlines of graffiti made on the walls of American subway stations, and became friends with the so-called “graffiti kid”, Jean Michel Basquiat, in 1979. In 1987, Haring painted the lines and symbols belonging to his own style on his own body and he allowed to be taken photos of himself in New York’s Times Square. He also painted American singer’s Grace Jones and dancer’s Bill T. Jones bodies. Haring made his graffiti works all over the world, including The United States, Europe and Australia. Some of his creations survived the time, for

example the one on the wall of the Stedelijk Museum store in Amsterdam, Nederland, made in 1986. But others were wiped off, such as the one on the Berlin's Wall in Germany, made in 1986. Haring cut out newspaper headlines just to reassemble them afterwards in order to obtain fake headlines such as: "Regan killed by a hero policeman", then spread them on the walls of the city's billboards. These images were drawn either with thick black carriocs or with white chalk. His efforts made him famous among New Yorkers, but he was arrested several times for his "artistic activity". Before being famous within the art galleries, Haring created tags which had a lot in commun with the cultures born from Walt Disney's comic books and his universe of cartoons. His 1982 exhibition at the prestigious Tony Shafrazi Gallery in New York City was a huge success, practically launching him into his new career as a graffiti artist. Haring's work was inspired by various sources: American artist Andy Warhol's work and those artists' representing the Pop movement, the rhythm and movements of African, Cuban and hip-hop dances and the Afro-Cuban current of painting on the human body.

Recently, graffiti artists have broadened their field of expression. Everyone's personal style is free to develop without any constraints, and stickers, posters, canvases, wax chalk, all kinds of paints and even sculptures are used to the fullest. Most artists have freed themselves from restrictions on the exclusive use of spray. Therefore, many of them hold on the idea of a post graffiti movement, characterized by a more innovative approaches to form and technique, that go beyond traditional perceptions of the classic graffiti style.(Ganz) We notice the possible affiliation to a gang: 'the Americans' are those who frequently draw a kind of caricature of the Statue of Liberty; the group of 'Ecologists' who use fluorescent green a lot; the "Pestilent Socks" – those who use B.D.'s manner of drawing and "Eterbeek" – those who keep the Tag as a simple and accurate drawing, without mixing it with letters or graffiti.

Graffers' works are organic chaos, with a hint of technology in the middle of the mess. Imor states, "The provocative nature of graffiti forces me to paint with creative integrity. I try to find a balance between order and chaos, the order being the preliminary structuring and the technical finesse and the chaos, the spontaneous elements. Finding this balance is what gives graffiti energy. Sometimes it works, other times it doesn't. That is the challenge that motivates me." (Ganz, 2004:133) To create the image of an object, of a situation, means to group their characteristics in the perspective of a certain intuitive scheme, so that the latter condenses in the meaning

of experiences and allows us to anticipate other possible experiences. The imagined work is born from an organizing project: the image is the condensation of a wide perspective in space and time.

The NGO is a mixed group of artists, is responsible for many large-scale murals and the reference point for a lot of alternative events and performances. Their works have experimental trends but also strong influences from the fine art using strong colors, abstractions and graphic distortions with glued elements, such as wood, plaster and paper.

Artists force both artistic and legal boundaries, but just as it is said, that aesthetics lags behind art, so, too does the law fall behind aesthetics. Graffiti represents, in a way, a criminal act composed of clashing and alternative aesthetics and although counterfeiting is a crime, it is not a natural one, because it derives from specific historical notions such as writing and author's status. What is graffiti after all? Beyond scholarly discussions, graffiti is a form of graphic manifestation on resistant media generated by a state of protest, conflict or frustration. It is a reality of our time, "of transition" or "crisis". There are three currents: the Tag, from the English tag having the meaning of badge, which is a mural itself. It is a kind of graphic coating, including variable areas and densities. This tag always designates a conflicting transition between the discipline of the institution and the anarchy of the street. The second one is Graffiti representing inscriptions and the third would be the Pochoir- the technique of applying color with the help of a cardboard in which the desired design or inscription is cut.

Mark Jenkins, an artist who treats public space like a huge white canvas, being in a dialogue with art critic Brian Sherwin, says, "There is a risk but I think that I have just demonstrated that street art is capable to break the ice. People should understand that public space is a battlefield covered with the image of those who run the government, with advertising and why not, with other artists. The public-artist relationship is based on the sincerity through which "one exposes himself without restraint to the other, in which one approaches the other and does not exhaust himself in invocation in the greeting that consists in nothing, understood as pure vocative (...). Sincerity is not reduced to anything existential, to nothing ontological and goes beyond or even beyond any positive aspect, any institution. It is neither an act, nor a movement, nor a cultural gesture; in fact, they already postulate the absolute piercing of the innerself." (Levinas, 1999:294)

“Painting” says Noah Mouloud in his *Painting and Space*, “has a register of formal dynamics which creates its own type of temporality. It is an ideal temporality that does not depend on the rhythm of speed and movement, but consists entirely in the formal transitions, in the rhythms that the gaze respects following the replacement of the formal sequences”. Although there are exceptions, in art, ‘most of the forms defined in this field have always presented their content in a linear or sequential way. In time, any new form of communication has evolved from its origins as an extension of an earlier form into a distinct one. This continuum of transformations and adaptations, as we shall see, is in fact, a complex process comparable in many respects to the evolution of species. The successful forms of the new media, just like the new species, do not appear spontaneously out of nowhere. They all need connections with the past.

Discussion

According to the results of the study, the author suggests several questions that require more in-depth study in the field of the research topic:

- Are there still limits in contemporary art?
- Do their revolt and irony have the right to refute political propriety and fairness?
- And if these actions are taken to the extreme, can their product still be called an object of art?

Conclusion

Why not look inside the community and use the talents that are already there, allowing community members to make their own community a better and more beautiful place to live in? Artists invoke the public space, they act to affirm and preserve the common space; this type of communication is valuable for the simple fact that it creates a connection between people regardless of cultural, linguistic or racial differences. Recently, art has been seeking, on one hand, to regenerate the old social contact with the political one, calling for the revocation of the public space, but, on the other hand, tends to anesthetize the new authority, helping to transform cities into malls and entertainment parks, in hidden, sublimated commercial traps. Can art stimulate? Can it produce open communication? The “publicity” of the urban space established ex officio, is not the preexistence of the event in that space and it is not continuous in time. Graffiti artists have very little in common with the image of the artist working alone in his studio to present his creations to a much smaller audience

in a gallery. All the lines inside a work of a graffiti artist are public and it reaches not only that percentage of spectators interested in painting, but public from the entire world. Taking this into consideration, we can conclude that we should extend these aspects to the artistic production outside the exhibition halls, which we should look at against the background of the current restoration processes that urbanism is going through. The public character is not representative and “a priori” but purely functional: it must be produced and reproduced over and over again. Public space is not an institution, but a function.

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Appendix



Figure 1. Urban graffiti , New York City, 1960s Taki 183 signature

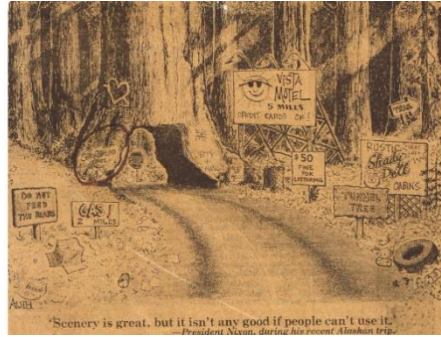


Figure 2. Cornbread and Cool Earl



Figure 3. Akroe



Figure 4. Akroe, Mode2, Illustration



Figure 5. KRSN, Gaffiti



Figure 6. Blek le RAT, stencil



Figure 7. Thomas Baumgartel,
Dortmunder U Methamorphose,
2010



Figure 8. Banksy, stencil



Figure 9. Os Gemeos, graffiti Sao Paolo



Figure 10. Loomit



Figure 11. ONG, 'The Group'



Figure 12. Mark Jenkins